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TRON: Legacy Movie Review



By [Perri Nemiroff](#)

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COMMENT

Title: TRON: Legacy

Directed By: Joseph Kosinski

Starring: Garrett Hedlund, Jeff Bridges, Olivia Wilde, Bruce Boxleitner, Beau Garrett, Michael Sheen, Owen Best

As a sequel to a film made in 1982 with a premise that lends itself to be visually and mentally stimulating, *TRON: Legacy* was guaranteed to be a spectacle. First time feature director Joseph Kosinski certainly makes due on that expectation, but not much else. Looks may not be everything, but in the case of *TRON: Legacy*, they're enough to keep you entertained for almost all of the film's 125 minutes, but beyond that, the only possible way the film will have resonance is through the Daft Punk soundtrack.

When we last left Kevin Flynn (Jeff Bridges) in the 1982 film *TRON*, he'd emerged from the grid and taken over Encom from Ed Dillinger, finally getting him back for when Dillinger stole Flynn's video game code and called it his own. *TRON: Legacy* kicks off in 1989. Flynn's wife passed away, he's now a single parent to their young son Sam (Owen Best) and Flynn's strange behavior is creating concern at Encom. Flynn regularly leaves Sam with his grandparents while he works late, but one night,

Flynn never returns. Twenty years later, Sam (Garrett Hedlund) is 27 and still without a father. After receiving a mysterious page from the phone in his father's old office, Sam heads over to Flynn's Arcade to investigate. He sits down at his father's computer to see what he'd been working on and, much like Flynn over 25 years ago, winds up being transported to the grid.

With no knowledge of where he is, Sam gets a quick wardrobe makeover and is tossed into the games where he must play to the death, or in this world's case, to the derez. That's where Sam meets Clu (Bridges), a program created in his father's image. Flynn originally instructed Clu to create the perfect system, but Clu wound up usurping his maker and building a dictatorship. Before Clu can kill Sam in the games, Quorra (Olivia Wilde) comes to the rescue, saving Sam and bringing him to his real father who's been trapped in the grid all this time. Together they must defeat Clu before he can gather the intelligence that would allow his army to invade the real world.

When you've got a film dealing with a different realm with all sorts of elements like different species, a unique structure of government and overall, an entirely different lifestyle, coming up with a tight story is particularly difficult. Those who are familiar with the original film certainly have a head start, but regardless, every viewer will be in the same place once Sam grows accustomed to life on the grid. *TRON: Legacy* actually does quite a good job of introducing newcomers to the situation, much in the same way as the original, but with serious visual effect upgrades; it's fascinating and mesmerizing.

The problems arise as the main struggle comes to the forefront. Yes, this is a fictional world, but that doesn't excuse the incredible amount of story absurdities. Characters magically unveil abilities and weapons just in the nick of time to save themselves and the plot from destruction. At first, this issue is no big deal, but the more it happens, the less suspenseful the film becomes. Eventually, the characters' survival feels so certain that nothing, not even a lost limb, will make you flinch. The worst in this series of irrationality is a particular revelation towards the



end of the film. Without spoiling anything, a key character comes to a realization that determines the success of the mission.

Absolutely nothing happens to instigate this change of heart, making the moment random and entirely unwarranted.

Just as silly as some of the plot points is the dialogue. There is an incredible amount of unnecessary exposition in the conversations. A great deal of information does require explanation, particularly for *TRON* newcomers, but it becomes more distracting than telling when characters must explain something we've already seen. And, even worse, it slows the pace of the film quite a bit.

As for the characters, Sam is basically your standard superhero who says things like, "You've got to be kidding me," when more danger comes his way. Speech is rarely used to propel the story forward or create any depth, rather just to state the obvious. This is a major problem when it comes to Hedlund's character. Wilde may not have the smartest dialogue either, but she manages to earn your sympathy through quiet emotion. Hedlund just isn't capable of this. So much of his character is built on the cliché of the rich boy rebelling that the drab talk just makes Sam even more one dimensional. The same goes for Bridges. Clu is the more interesting of his two characters simply because Flynn, is too "zen." Rather than donning the usual garb of the programs, Flynn is like a monk, walking around barefoot, dressed in a white robe that he accessorizes with a beaded bracelet. At one point, he even meditates.

Perhaps Flynn should have a word with Zuse (Michael Sheen) because that character is so wildly out of control, he often becomes flat out annoying. Zuse is a grandiose club owner decked out in all white, fitted with a walking stick and long locks not unlike Sheen's do in *The Twilight Saga*, but white. After spending so much time with Flynn and Sam, a more colorful albeit white character like Zuse is wildly refreshing. However, the more time you spend with Zuse, the more you want him to just derez already. He's particularly distracting during a fight scene where, rather than just keep the camera on the action, Kosinski opts to put the attention on Zeus' childish taunting.

On the bright side, as expected, the visuals are absolutely fantastic. Not only is this the best use of 3D this year, but the imagery all around is mesmerizing. The costumes, the city, the light cycles, the disc battles, everything completely pops off the screen, feels real and makes you wish it were real. Every element is monumentally upgraded from the first film from the way the suits define the contour of the body to the much more vivid and threatening version of derezzing. The light cycles also look particularly fantastic. They're certainly more hi-tech this time around, but still maintain a sense of the simplistic video game. As for Bridges' younger look as Clu, it's remarkable how much he looks like his character the 1982 film. Forget Botox and facelift; folks should want whatever he got.

Another element deserving of praise is the score. Actually, the music is almost as impactful as the visuals. When Sam is speeding down the road on his motorcycle and that booming electronic sound joins in, it's chilling. This happens quite a lot throughout the film, primarily during the more action-packed moments. Musically, Daft Punk and *TRON* is a perfect match, but in terms of the visuals, their onscreen camera is quite overdone.

TRON: Legacy is all entertainment and nothing more.

There are a ton of elements in this new movie that carry over from the original, but the effect of the film is entirely different. While the costumes and effects in the original are so poor they look silly nowadays, there was a level of depth and peril to that film that this new one could never achieve even with all of the bells and whistles of hi-tech CGI. *TRON* is far from a dramatic masterpiece, but in comparison to *Legacy*, it's a much tighter piece that's far more sensible even in this surreal world. Minus missing rationality and the lull in the middle, *TRON*:

Legacy is a blast to watch and fun enough that you can push the ludicrous nature story aside for the time being. However, once you leave the theater and return to reality, you'll undoubtedly be questioning the validity of the story.

Technical: A

Story: C

Acting: B-

Overall: B-

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Perri Nemiroff

Film producer and director best known for her work in movies such as FaceTime, Trevor, and The Professor. She has worked as an online movie blogger and reporter for sites such as CinemaBlend.com, ComingSoon.net, Shockya, and MTV's Movies Blog.

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